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HOW IT WAS DONE IN HARMONY

JOHN T. FARIS

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HOW IT WAS DONE IN HARMONY

A STORY OF ADULT CLASS WORK

By

JOHN T. FARIS

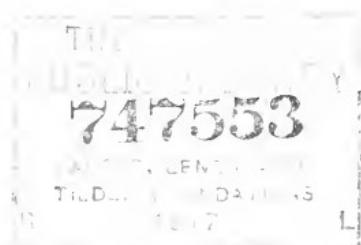
Author of "The Mother Heart,"
"The Book of Faith in God,"
"The Book of Personal
Work," etc.

"From henceforth ye shall catch men"

CINCINNATI

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I

THE GIRL WITH THE PITCHER

THE day I have looked forward to for seven years!

"Nothing but God's glad out of doors will suit me this morning," he thought. Then he hurried to the street.

Joyfully Philip Ostend walked the streets of Andean, a town noted for its beauty. But he was not there to note the beauty of his surroundings; he was walking because he was too happy to stay in the cozy room provided for him by the hostess who had begged for the privilege of entertaining the young man who was to be the central figure of the ceremony that evening.

"Seven years!" he repeated, as he headed toward the open country. "I thought the time would be long, and it has really been short. Four years in college and three years in the seminary. And such good years, too! Now that I have come to the time of my ordination I feel sorry the days with the class are over."

In thought he reviewed the years at school—the struggle to pay his way, the joy of the search for knowledge, the delight of intimate fellowship with the men with whom he had lived so long. Then he harked back to the days before the beginning of his college course.

"What I would have missed if I had been true to my determination to have done with text-books after the completion of the course in the Mordaunt High School!" he thought. "Yet at that time there seemed to me nothing better in life than the work in the Mordaunt *News* office. How proud I felt that they wanted me there, and that they thought me worth nine dollars a week in the office at that time because of my work during the years of the high-school course! I thought of the time when my name would be on the firm's stationery, and I wished to stay there and make a good living.

"I didn't know it at the time, but I came to the turning-point of my life that Saturday afternoon when Giles Bennett dropped in and said he wanted me to go with him next day to the meeting of The Fishermen's Bible Class. I didn't think much of the idea of attending a Sunday-school class—I thought

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I had graduated from that sort of thing—but I had always had a soft place in my heart for Giles Bennett since he sat up with me during my hard time with typhoid fever. So I told him he might call for me, and I would go with him.

"I hoped he would forget, but I am mighty glad he remembered. I expected to be bored, but I was disappointed. What a splendid set of men! And how they did make me feel at home! In a minute I was hearing all about their family affairs—they were just like a family in that class. One fellow told about his visit to an engineer who had been laid up in the Mordaunt hospital with a broken leg. The man next him wanted to know what the class was going to do for the family of a teamster who had been unable to work for a month. Then there was that committeeman who reported on the leper in India for whom the class was caring.

"I remember that I asked how they came to be doing so much for these folks. Was the engineer one of them? How long had that teamster been a member of the class? How did they ever get interested in a leper so far away from home? Wouldn't

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it be better to spend their money on themselves?

"What an eye-opener I got then! That class made it their business to look after people who needed them. Of course, they took care of their own members, but they did far more for other people than they did for themselves, and they seemed to enjoy it all.

"It wasn't long till I was enjoying things with the rest of them. They put me on their Lookout Committee, and before I knew it I was out after men and explaining to them all about our work for the other fellow.

"Then came that day when they appointed me to represent the class at the Oglesby conference of the men's classes of the county. I thought I would have a good time listening to what the delegates had to say, but I hadn't been in the room five minutes when my breath was taken away by the announcement of the chairman, 'Philip Ostend, of the famous Mordaunt Fishermen, will talk on personal work at the afternoon meeting.' That was a starter! Why, I had never talked in public outside of our own classroom. And I didn't know anything about personal work. Of

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course, I knew that some of the other fellows were always busy fishing for men, but I had never been able to get up courage to do more than ask a man to attend the class. I knew that wasn't personal work. Yet here I was asked to talk on the subject!

"I remembered how I tried to catch the president's eye; I wanted to tell him he'd better get some one else, if he didn't want to have the afternoon meeting queered at the start. But just as I was about to speak to him a man in the seat behind leaned over and whispered: 'Glad you're going to talk on that subject. I want to tell our class how Mordaunt gets hold of men.'

"I'm afraid I didn't answer very politely. I got up in a hurry and went outside. I wished I could go home. Why had I listened when they talked of sending me to that meeting? Why hadn't the chairman asked my leave before announcing my name? Why didn't the class send some one who could talk on personal work?

"Of course, questions like that led straight to another query: Why didn't I do personal work? I had plenty of answers. It wasn't my forte. I hadn't had a good chance. It took too much nerve to talk to

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a man about his soul. Some day, perhaps, I would, but not now. I could think of any number of excuses for leaving personal work to somebody else.

"But I had to stop thinking of myself just at that point because I heard a man say, over and over: 'It's no use; I've got to give up. It's no use; I've got to give up!' I had to look for the speaker; his tone even more than his words told me that something serious was the matter. I found him sitting on a box in the coal-bin. He started to shut the door as I came up, but I put my foot on the sill and said:

"'Say, old man, I didn't mean to hear what you said, but now that I have heard, I wonder if it wouldn't help you to tell me all about it.'

"For an instant I didn't know but he was going to tell me to go about my business. Then he seemed to think better of it, and made a place for me by his side.

"What a story he told me of the son who was spoiling his life by reckless living! Just the day before he had paid over all his savings to save the boy from prison. 'And now I'm done,' he said. He said it in such a way that I knew what he meant—he

The Girl with the Pitcher

thought of dying before God told him he was ready to have him die.

"How my heart went out to that poor father! I didn't know what I was doing, but somehow my arm got about his shoulder and I began to tell him that he couldn't expect to carry a load like that all alone. I told him how God wanted to put his arms under the load and carry it for him. Then we were on our knees there in the coal. First I prayed, then he prayed. And when we got up he had a new look in his face. 'God bless you,' he said. 'You've made a new man of me.'

"I was so happy when I left him—after promising to see him again that afternoon—that I forgot all about my own trouble. When I went upstairs the conference had adjourned for lunch, so I had no chance to see the chairman. During the lunch hour I made up my mind to try to say something. What it would be I didn't know.

"When I was on the floor I decided that the best thing was to make an open confession and promise to try to be a better Fisherman. So I told why the appointment to speak on personal work bothered me. I told of going out of the room to think. I

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told of the man in the basement, and explained about his trouble. I remember I told the men I was sure he wouldn't object if I told about him; maybe he would like to have them know. After a little more explanation I sat down, but not until after telling of my purpose—God helping—to bring some one to him.

"At once I heard some one say: 'Men, he's made his beginning already. While we have been sitting here talking of ways to work, he has been at work. He has led a man to God to-day. I knew to whom he had been talking—our own church janitor, for whom no one of us ever thought of doing a thing. I went to him just now to see if I could help him, and I found that it had all been done. He told me he was feeling fine because one of the delegates talked to him like a brother this morning, prayed with him and led him to God. Mr. Chairman, may I suggest that some one lead us in a prayer of thanksgiving for the object-lesson in personal work we have had to-day?'

"It was during that prayer I heard God's call to be a minister. If it was such joy to lead one soul to Christ, what would

it be to spend one's life in doing work for him!

"And now I have come to the day of my ordination. To-morrow I am to go back to Monteagle Seminary. Sunday I am to go to Metropolis to talk about settling as pastor of the church there. They offer a good opening. To be sure, they want a man who will accept the parsonage. But they will probably agree to rent the house during my pastorate. I am glad I am not likely to marry. No girl has ever made my heart" . . .

"Oh, I beg your pardon!" he said. He was addressing a girl with whom he had collided.

Till then he did not realize that he had left the country road and was back in Andean. "I didn't see you," he added lamely.

"That is quite evident, sir," she said, with a twinkle in her eye. "Now, just see what you have done!"

Philip looked. From the pitcher in the girl's hand milk had been splashed on the walk and on her gown.

"I beg your pardon; I didn't see you!" he repeated.

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"So you said before. And do you really think you ought to be excused for not seeing me?"

Before he could reply she was gone, around the corner, but the sound of her laugh lingered.

"Evidently she is not used to having men fail to see her," he thought. "She is worth seeing, too. I wonder who she is!"

He made cautious inquiries of his hostess, but she could not satisfy his curiosity as to the identity of the Girl with the Pitcher.

That he was still thinking of her next morning when he was on the way back to Monteagle was evident from his revised thoughts about Metropolis:

"Maybe it would be just as well if they did not rent that parsonage for more than a few months. One never knows!"

II

A DISCOURAGING PROSPECT

WHEN Philip Ostend reached his room at Monteagle Seminary his thoughts were still of the parsonage at Metropolis and the Girl with the Pitcher whom he hoped to ask to occupy it with him. So the letter bearing the Metropolis postmark which he found on his table was eagerly pounced on.

"Maybe that is to tell me all is settled," he thought.

Yes, the letter did tell him all was settled—but not in the way he expected. They had settled on one of his classmates for pastor.

"Sorry to disappoint you," was the message, "but we feel we must have some one in the parsonage this fall."

"Why couldn't I have met the Girl with the Pitcher before my last visit to Metropolis?" he groaned. "But I must not act like this. This is the best time to go to congratulate the successful man."

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Two discouraging weeks followed. He learned of churches that might want a young pastor, but inquiries proved fruitless. At last he was told that the only possible field was Harmony Center.

"I hate to speak of that church," his professor said to him, sympathetically. "They have the reputation of starving every preacher who goes there. But some day the right man will get hold of them, and they will take a new lease of life. Who knows but you will be the man?"

Ostend did not need to be told about Harmony Center. The little town of a thousand people was only twenty miles from his own home. It was a town that belied its name; the people who lived on one side of the Rendorp River were at war with those who lived on the other side. This rivalry of the "Insiders" and the "Outsiders," as they called themselves, was known far and near. His heart sank as he thought of working there.

The professor explained that the First Church—the church of the Insiders—had written to Monteagle asking for a minister. "Just send a man along," the letter said. "We'll have to take anybody you give us."

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Ostend wrote for information. What salary could they pay? He did not seek a large salary, but he wished to know what he could count on.

Four days later he received a noncommittal answer. "We may be able to pay five hundred dollars, possibly six; it depends on the man and the way the people feel toward him."

When he insisted that he must know definitely, the only reply was a clipping telling him how five people had managed to live comfortably on five dollars a week!

When he showed the unsatisfactory correspondence to the professor, he was asked if it was not his duty at least to go to the town and look over the field.

"All right; come ahead," was the reply to his letter telling of his purpose to spend a Sunday at Harmony Center. "We'll pay your expenses if you will spend a Sunday with us."

He was not very enthusiastic as he started on the two-hundred-mile trip from the seminary. With every mile of the journey his courage oozed away till, when he reached the town on the Rendorp, he wished he was anywhere else. "The old

printing-office would be a desirable refuge just now," he thought.

He had sent word that he might be expected at four o'clock Saturday afternoon. When he alighted from the train he looked about him for some one from the church. No one approached him. He waited till he was the only man left on the platform. Then he started for the business section. "I'll have to look up Mr. Lumly," he decided, as he thought of his correspondent. "He'll have a place for me to stay. Perhaps he will take me home with him. It will be so good to get a good rest after this tedious trip."

He had no difficulty in finding Mr. Lumly, but he was disappointed when he inquired where he was to go.

"Oh, it will be no trouble to find a place," Mr. Lumly consoled him. "You might try Mrs. Wood. She keeps boarders. Or there is Mrs. Goforth. Try her, if Mrs. Wood has no place for you. See you to-morrow, if I happen to be out at church. If not, drop in Monday morning."

"It is fortunate that my spirits are at zero already," Ostend thought, as he started toward Mrs. Wood's house. "They can't

fall any lower, that's one thing certain."

Mrs. Wood could not accommodate him. She told him how to find Mrs. Goforth. There he was more fortunate. At any rate, he was given a room. But before he had eaten many meals of Mrs. Goforth's preparation he wondered if he had been so fortunate, after all. Mrs. Goforth was an insurance agent who spent eight hours a day at her office, and did the housework before and after business hours. Breakfast was a poor excuse. On week days his luncheon was waiting for him on the back of the stove, where it had been put in the morning. Dinner was prepared hastily in the evening, usually from cans of ready-cooked food.

But he did not learn these things all at once; evidently his landlady thought that it would be better if he should learn by experience.

After looking about his cheerless room he decided to spend the hour till dinner in studying the town. He was curious to see more of the place that had been a byword in his home town ever since he could remember.

In a few moments he was able to appre-

ciate something of the reasons for the rivalry of the two sections of the town. It was built on both sides of the river, which made a curve like a horseshoe right at the point where the town was located. Inside the horseshoe was the older portion of the town, while outside was the newer and more progressive portion. On both sides of the stream there were business houses. Each side had two churches. Inside was the courthouse; outside were the railway station and the post-office. The Outsiders called the Inside "The Pocket," and poked fun at their neighbors. The consequent bitterness showed itself, not only in social and business matters, but in the churches. There was one bit of neutral ground—a small island in the Rendorp; across this travelers on the main street found their way by the use of two bridges. Even here the rivalry was apparent. The Insiders boasted that their cement bridge was better than the Outsiders' steel bridge, but the Outsiders contended that steel was superior to cement.

The First Church was Inside, so the Outsiders—who had learned his identity with the speed characteristic of small towns

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—looked at him pityingly. Insiders shrugged their shoulders as he passed. He wondered why, until he overheard one say to another: "Our new preacher. Well, he won't last long."

"I ought to resent that," he thought. "But I don't. The fact is, I don't see how any one can last long in a place like this."

The result of his observations, interpreted in the light of Mrs. Goforth's cheerful monologue at the dinner table, was this last thought before going to sleep:

"I guess it is just as well I didn't learn the identity of the Girl with the Pitcher. I don't seem to be making very rapid progress toward a home."

Sunday morning he felt better. "Surely it can't be so bad," he thought, as he gazed at the little white church which looked so inviting in the sunlight. "I'll feel like a new man after service this morning."

When he entered the building he thought he must have made a mistake in the time; not one worshiper was there. But his doubt was set at rest by the sound of the courthouse bell striking eleven.

Sick at heart, he sank into a seat and looked about him. Windows were broken

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and stuffed with rags. The wallpaper hung in strips. A leaky roof had permitted the rain to make depressing decorations on the walls and ceiling. The carpet was ragged and dirty, and the pulpit chairs—

“O God! put heart into me!” he cried, as he bowed his head on the rail in front of him.

“Hello! Are you the preacher? Yes? Well, I’m the congregation!”

He looked around at the speaker, a man who explained that he was janitor.

“That is, when it’s worth while to open the church,” the man added, cautiously.

“Do you think it is worth while to-day?”

“Surely! Why, I believe you’re discouraged! Mustn’t get that way yet. If you don’t keep up now, what will you do when things really go wrong? It’s only ten minutes after eleven. They’ll begin to come in five or ten minutes. By half-past eleven you’ll have enough to begin.”

“Do they always come this way—late, I mean?” Ostend asked.

“Most always—that is, when they think it worth while to come at all.”

“Tell me about the church, won’t you? What’s the best word about it?”

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"Well, the best thing I can think of now is that the members aren't all at logger heads."

"You mean that some of them are?"

"Only 'Mandy Spillway and Deacon Lumly, and Dr. Tibbits and Hezekiah Smallridge. 'Mandy hasn't spoken to the deacon for ten years, and Hezekiah vows he wouldn't lift his finger to save Dr. Tibbits from freezing. There's some that sides with the deacon and Hezekiah, and there's some that sides with Amanda and the doctor. But, take it all together, I think we're a right peaceable lot."

"How about the Sunday school? Is there much life there?"

"Well, there might be, and again there mightn't. Depends on what you call life. Just be patient a little, and you'll find out for yourself. You know, Sunday school meets right after the service, if enough feel like staying."

By this time a dozen or more people were in their places. As no one took the organ, Ostend appealed, in turn, to the three young women present until one consented to take the instrument. "If you'll let me pick the hymns," she said.

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He hardly knew how he got through that service. But at last it was time for the Sunday school. The children and young people gathered slowly, but when the three teachers took their classes there were thirty-four present.

"Pretty good, don't you think?" the janitor asked him. "Best day we've had for a long time. You see, I keep the books. They haven't had a regular secretary for nearly two years. I just fill in."

"But where is the adult Bible class?" the young minister asked.

"Adult Bible class? What's that? Oh, the old folks' class, you mean? None of them come any more. They say we'll have to run the concern ourselves. I wouldn't be here myself if I wasn't janitor."

"Well, I'll have an adult class if I stay here," Ostend said to himself. He thought of the class which had given him his start in Christian work.

"If there's any hope for Harmony Center First Church, the organized class will prove it. I'll have a class before I'm here a month or my name isn't Philip Ostend. I can't live without it. I need the young men to stand by me."

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But when the day was over and he went to his room at Mrs. Goforth's, worn out by the efforts that seemed so futile, he had decided that the dream of organizing an adult class in that Sunday school was idle.

"There's nothing here," he thought. And he dropped on his knees at the bedside.

"O God!" he prayed, "deliver me from Harmony Center."

He paused. "No, God won't bless a prayer like that," he mused. "I'll try again."

"Master, if thou dost want to use me in Harmony Center, thy will be done."

III

MINGLED EMOTIONS

WELL, what do you think of Harmony Center by this time?" was Mr. Lumly's greeting when Ostend dropped into the Lumly Dry Goods Emporium on Monday morning.

"Lots of work to be done here, isn't there?" Ostend tried to be cheerful.

"Now, young man, don't make the mistake of thinking you must make over the place. We're a pretty good set, as churches go nowadays. Of course, there are some things that might be better, but under the circumstances—everything considered, as you might say—we're a pretty middling lot. Some work for you to do, of course; that much is taken for granted, or we wouldn't want a pastor. But we won't overwork you; don't make any mistake about that."

"You think you want me to come, then?"

"Well, you'll do as well as any one, I suppose. I haven't heard much against

you, and I've heard some things in your favor."

"Have you been able to decide as to the amount of the salary? You see, I want to be businesslike, and I feel that it would be as well to have a definite amount in mind."

"Still harping on that, are you? We did hope to say something definite by this time, seeing you feel about it as you do. Silas Beggs started out with a subscription-paper, but he got tired after he had seen a few of the members. Arthur Morgan said he would finish the job, but I heard Saturday he went down to the city before he had done much. Guess you'll have to start out on faith, so to speak."

"But can't you give me some idea? Surely you know if you can pay six hundred dollars?"

"I'm not so sure of that. Six hundred dollars is a lot of money, and money comes mighty hard. You're a single man now. Seven or eight dollars a week would take care of you right well, wouldn't it? When I was your age I never thought of putting out over two hundred a year on myself. Careful in spending, that's my motto, and I'd like to commend it to you."

"Would it be possible for you to guarantee me an income of ten dollars a week? If you can do that, I'll promise to think matters over, and let you know in two or three days."

"Maybe we can pay that much, and again maybe we can't. Forty people would have to pay twenty-five cents a week each. That's a good deal to expect, the way the cost of living has gone up. But we'll see. I think I can promise this: we'll give you ten dollars a week, if you'll be easy on us when it is hard to raise the amount. You'll let us know by Thursday? You see, we want to get the notice in the *Argus* on Friday if you intend to preach on Sunday.

"You intend to stay here till to-morrow? That's right. Take a good look around. It isn't every young theologue who gets a chance to practice on a town like Harmony Center."

"Yes, I want to call on two or three people who asked me to look them up. I promised the janitor up at the church I would call on his sick wife."

"Good! You can't begin ringing door-bells too soon."

Mr. Lumly laughed at his own bright

remark, and turned to wait on a customer.

"I can't come, after all," Ostend thought, as he started in search of the home to which he had been directed. "I don't think God expects it of me. Think of being tied up for a year or two in such a church and such a town!"

"Lord, show me what you want me to do," he prayed silently.

The answer to his prayer came speedily. The message was given to him by Mrs. Galton, the janitor's wife. She greeted him heartily when he entered her bedroom.

"I wanted to come out yesterday, but I haven't been able to go to church for three years. I won't ask you how you like us. I won't even ask you if you are coming to us. I hope you are. We need you here. Mr. Ostend, I'll be more frank than that. I'm not thinking so much of the rest of the people as I am of my boy, Lemuel. He has given us a good deal of concern. No one has been able to do much with him. He is a good boy, but he is so easily led; you know what that means when there are plenty of young men to lead him the wrong way, and so few to take an interest in leading him the right way. He doesn't take

any interest in the few who do. But he has taken a fancy to you. Saturday night he came home and said: 'That young preacher is my style. When I was walking up from the station, I passed Mike Turner, who was pushing his old rag-cart along Main Street. The cart tipped over when it struck that bad place in the road in front of the bank. Three men passed the cart with a laugh. But when the preacher came up he dropped his valise in the mud and helped Mike right the cart and pick up the bundles of rags. Then he walked on as if nothing had happened. I'm going to hear that preacher to-morrow.' He did hear you. At the dinner table he said: 'That Ostend has the right stuff in him. I'd like to know him.'

"You see why I want you to stay. I know it does not seem like an attractive opening. But think what it would mean if you could get hold of Lemuel! I know you can get hold of him—you've done it already. Mr. Ostend, you see what your staying here would mean for me. Does it mean anything to you to have a chance like that?"

"Indeed it does, Mrs. Galton. Thank

you for telling me. I have promised to give an answer by Thursday. I think I know what my answer must be."

That evening he was tempted to be sorry he had given this half-assurance. When he reached his boarding-house he found no one at home. No preparation had been made for dinner. He waited for half an hour. He was going out of the door, intending to hunt for a restaurant, when he met his landlady.

"A little late, I know," she said. "But a wait helps along the appetite, you know. I'll be ready in a jiffy. I have the dinner right here—a can of baked beans. What could be more wholesome than baked beans and good bread and butter? I won't make you wait while I cook the beans, either. If you'll open the can, I'll cut the bread, and we'll be ready."

Ostend found it difficult to wax enthusiastic over that meal. He tried to be courteous, but he was afraid he made a poor attempt.

In the morning he stopped at Mr. Lumly's office, hoping that something would be said about a fee for the Sunday preaching. He did not have sufficient funds to

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pay his fare back to Monteagle, or he would have let the matter go by default.

"Let's see, we were to pay your expenses, weren't we? Seems like a good deal for what little you did Sunday. I find we took in four dollars and sixty cents. Suppose we call it four dollars even. Will that fix you up all right?"

Ostend made a rapid calculation. Four dollars would be more than enough to pay his fare to the seminary. But he would have nothing for the expense of returning—in case he should decide to return.

"My bare expense will be six dollars and seventy cents," he said. "If you could let me have that amount—"

"So? Well, let us see about it. You sit right here. I'll be back pretty soon."

He returned in fifteen minutes.

"I've just been up and down the street, taking up a collection for you. I told the folks I met that you say you must have more money. Here is what I got. Don't know how much it is. That's all right, though; we won't keep too strict an account. Hold out you hands."

Half ashamed, Ostend did as he was told. He dropped the change into his

pocket, and hurried off for the train. At the station he counted his collection, and found that Mr. Lumly had gathered six dimes, ten nickels and eight pennies!

"Isn't it a good thing I didn't stay another day?" he thought, grimly. "I might have found too many arguments against undertaking the church of Harmony Center."

For twenty-four hours after his return to his room he weighed the reasons for and against the strange invitation to a pastorate. The arguments in favor of a negative answer were many and unanswerable—until he thought of Mrs. Galton and her son, Lemuel. "I'll have to go," he said at last. "It is a trying proposition, but I can't turn down the chance to reach that young man."

He went to sleep on Wednesday evening thinking of the day when Lemuel would be his right-hand man in the church. Perhaps he would be president of the adult Bible class he must have before many weeks.

The next morning he sent a message of acceptance to Mr. Lumly, and on Friday he was in Harmony Center once more.

"So here you are!" Mr. Lumly greeted

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him. "Just in time to read this letter from the chairman of the committee that helps us pay our preacher. We've been getting two hundred a year from them for some time back. Lucky, aren't we?"

"You mean that you have home-mission aid to help you pay six hundred dollars a year?"

"Not so fast, Mr. Ostend. Five hundred, not six hundred. We're going to try to make it ten dollars a week, you remember. That was the bargain, and a bargain's a bargain, even if it is a church matter. Of course, you remember we are not actually bound by the ten dollars a week. We'll try, though; we'll try."

"Don't you think it would be a fine thing if we could stand on our own feet next year? I don't like the idea of that home-mission money. You know, there are so many churches in the West that need the money so much."

"Don't we need it? How are we going to pay you without it? And why should we throw the money back at the home-mission people? Would that be treating them right, after the way they have helped us out? Why, it is their business to find places

to put their money. Why should we make their job harder for them by making them hunt for another place for the money? And why should we do what would be as foolish as throwing money in the street?"

"No use to say any more now," Ostend thought. "But that home-mission matter must be settled right before the year is gone."

On the bridge leading to the island he met Lemuel Galton with two companions. The young men were passing him without a word, but Ostend stopped them.

"It is good to see a face that I know, Mr. Galton," he said, as he offered his hand. "I am looking forward to knowing you better."

"Why, how did you come to know me?"

"When a man pays as good attention to a preacher's sermon as you did last Sunday, can you blame the preacher for asking about him?"

Lemuel blushed with pleasure. Then he covered his confusion by introducing his friends.

"Make you acquainted with Tom Murphy and Albert Jenkins," he said.

"That preacher's a bit of all right," he

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explained to the young men who had just shaken hands with Ostend. "There'll be something doing in this town, sure, and he'll be doing it. Mark my words!"

But Lemuel did not know the part he was to have in the "something doing."

IV

FINDING FOUR FRIENDS

ON the following Sunday twice as many were present as on the previous Sunday, and many of them came earlier than usual.

"You ought to feel encouraged, Mr. Ostend," Mr. Galton assured him after he had shaken hands with the last of the congregation. "The collection for helping to build new churches ought to be pretty good. Just wait a minute, and I'll tell you what is in the baskets.

"Just \$1.98," he continued. "You think that isn't much? You wouldn't say so if you knew the amount of last year's collection for the same work. You may be sure the board wouldn't ask the members for this money, if we hadn't promised to do it once a year because they helped us when we put up this building."

"You had help? How much?"

"One thousand dollars. Right smart of a lift, wasn't it?"

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"And you mean to say that the church is content to send \$1.98 to the folks who gave them one thousand dollars? That will never do. Why, six per cent. interest would be sixty dollars, to say nothing of the principal."

"Oh, we're not saying anything about interest, either. What's the use?"

"But I must say something. When the people really understand, I believe they will want to do better."

"May I speak a word of advice, Mr. Ostend? Don't you think you had better say as little as possible about what we give? You see, every cent given to outsiders cuts off just that much from your support. I know you aren't thinking of that all the time. But wouldn't it be wise if you should think about it a little more than you seem to be doing?"

On Monday morning Ostend awoke with a mixture of sensations. He was tempted to wish himself back at the seminary. Why had he been in such haste to settle at Harmony Center? He would not have waited long for another church, and anything would be better than the present incubus!

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He turned to his Bible reading with a prayer that he might find some word to cure him of the blues. He began to read of the disciple who did not know what to do after Jesus' death until Peter said, "I go a-fishing."

"Good for Peter!" he said, shutting the book. "That's what I'll do! I didn't think I would take advantage of Mr. Lumly's offer of his horse and buggy so soon. I can go to Mr. Norton's farm—he asked me to drop around at his place some day, and try my luck in the pools of the Rendorp. I'll be there so soon he won't know what to make of me."

He was not at Mr. Norton's place as soon as he thought he would be, however; he had some difficulty in following the directions given him by Mr. Lumly. At last he managed to reach the right place—or so he thought. He turned in at a pasture gate, as Mr. Norton had told him to do. He passed the grazing cattle, entered the wood, and finally came to the stream where the water sometimes leaped over the rocky shallows and again filled the deep pools which experience told him were capital lurking-places for fish.

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"Now for bait!" he thought. "Wonder if I've forgotten how to find the delicious morsels the fish demand? I suppose I ought to have flies, but I have had so many other uses for money that my supply of fishing-tackle has run low."

He was busy turning over half-rotted logs, in search of grubs, when a crackling of the twigs near at hand startled him. He looked up and saw Lemuel Galton, Tom Murphy and Albert Jenkins.

"Just the thing!" Ostend greeted them. "I never did like to go fishing alone. Now I have company to order. I see you have your lines. Got any bait? I have enough for four, I do believe. And as for lunch, the basket I brought from the house is so heavy it must be intended for four people. You have lunch, have you? Well, we'll join forces and have a regular picnic."

In spite of the promising appearance of the stream, the fishing was not good, but the four were soon so busy talking that they had no opportunity to think regretfully of the sport.

Ostend told of a fishing trip he took one summer on Go Home River in Canada—the stream named by the Indians of the

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Muskoka region in the days when they went down to Georgian Bay for their annual fishing trips; "the way we go home," they called it. The Indians were gone, but the name was their monument. His companions listened spellbound, while he described the row up the stream; the carry over the chute used in the spring by the lumbermen in floating the great pine logs from the interior to the open water; the fight to land a muskallonge; the taste of fish cooked over the campfire; the glorious sunburn he secured that day, and the way he had slept the night following the day in the open.

Then Tom told of his first fishing expedition—in the creek by the old log schoolhouse. "When I got to the big hole by the first log I found I had lost my bait out of a hole in my pocket—I put worms, dirt and all into the pocket. And I had forgotten to get a hook. I had bragged about the fish I was going to catch, so I didn't propose to go back home to be jeered at. I started to coax the fish with a bent pin at the end of a bit of twine. My brother would have laughed at me if he had seen me fishing without bait. And he would have laughed still harder if he had seen

me pull out of the water a sunfish four inches long which had caught on the bent pin while swimming over it. That four-inch sunfish—an accidental catch—was the first fish I ever caught. Of course, I have had two and three pounders since then, but they didn't count by the side of that sunfish."

By this time lunch was over and the four young men were on good terms. "He doesn't seem a bit like a preacher!" Ostend's three companions were thinking. "I don't believe it will be hard to get them to do what I want," the young minister was thinking. "Maybe in a month—"

"So it's you, is it?" A voice interrupted his thoughts. "I've been on the lookout for the rascals who have been trespassing on my place. Don't you know my farm is posted? Can't you read? or doesn't it mean anything to you that this is my farm, and that I have a right to fish the stream myself and keep others from fishing? I've a good mind to make an example of you. How would you like to be sent to jail? I could manage it very easily. The sheriff is down the road a piece at Brother Joe's. Suppose I send for him and ask him to cart

the four of you into town? Guess that would tone you down a bit, wouldn't it?

"It's bad enough for boys like these three," the irate farmer continued. "But what are we coming to when a grown man like you"—turning to Ostend—"descends to poaching and pilfering? Yes, pilfering; I don't believe in mincing words, you thieves, you low-down scum—"

His breath was stopped for the instant by Lemuel Galton, who whispered in the farmer's ear.

"What? You don't mean it! This the new preacher? Well, I am still more surprised. One expects better than this from a preacher. As for you boys, now—No, I won't send you to jail. I'm going to thrash you, all three of you."

As he spoke he was throwing off his coat and rolling up his sleeves. Ostend watched these preparations till he thought it was time to interfere.

"Mr. Norton," he said, "I'm the one to blame, not these young men. I was looking for Mr. Joseph Norton's place. I see I turned out from the road too soon. He invited me yesterday to fish on his place. My friends here were walking

through the wood and I called to them. I invited them to fish with me, and they couldn't very well refuse. So, you see, I am the one for you to thrash."

"Thrash the preacher? Not if I know myself! Mr. Ostend, I'm proud to have you here, and I hope you'll come again. I guess I'll have to let these boys go, too, since you are so good as to stand up for them. But let them look out how they come this way again.

"Make yourself at home, sir," he added, and turned away.

"I don't believe we'll enjoy staying here now, do you, fellows? Suppose we get along. I'll hitch up, then you can pile in with me; the seat will hold two and the others can hang on behind."

"He's a captain, all right!" Tom Murphy said to Albert Jenkins, while they were fastening the traces. "He can have me, if he wants me!"

"Me, too," Albert agreed

Thus they were all ready for the minister's seemingly careless remark, dropped while they were on the way back to town:

"I wish we four could get together on Sunday."

"What for?" Lemuel asked, with interest.

"To study the Bible, for one thing."

"I'm glad you said that," Lemuel beamed. "If you had said, 'To get better acquainted,' or, 'To have some more good times,' I would have known you were trying to trap us. But when you come right out and say exactly what you want, I'm for you. We'll come, won't we, boys?"

"Yes, but I wish we could have Mark Mayhew with us." It was Jenkins who spoke. "Three won't make a big class, and we three without Mayhew won't be worth much. Do you suppose we could get him?"

"Not if the Court knows itself!" Tom Murphy spoke decisively. "He has put his foot down hard. Yesterday afternoon I was telling him what a fine preacher the new man is, and he sneered: 'He doesn't get around me with his fine ways. I wonder how you boys care to be taken in; you are usually such a level-headed lot.' "

Ostend parted from his companions at the stable. But they did not go until they had assured him once more they would be on hand the following Sunday afternoon.

"That will be a start," Ostend calculated, a little later. "But I would like to

have that Mark Mayhew. Already I have heard enough of him to know that he is the leader of the young men of the town. I must meet him."

He did meet him on Friday evening. He had decided to mail a circular letter to the members of the church, appealing to them to make the offering for the church-building society at least ten dollars. After preparing his copy, he took it to the *Argus* office.

"Why, Friday's our press-day!" the foreman told him. "We can't touch your work till to-morrow. Too late for you then? Sorry, but we can't help it."

"If you had an extra man, could you do it?"

"Sure! But where will we get him?"

"Right here, if you'll let me work with your material. I am enough of a printer to set the circular and put it in the press. Give me leave?"

"Sure thing! Go ahead!"

That night Mark Mayhew, who was a compositor in the printing-office, told Lemuel Galton and Tom Murphy what followed.

"We watched him, thinking he would

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get into difficulties. Not much! He's a printer, all right. The circular was done in good time and in good shape. I tell you, he's my sort of man."

"That so? Then maybe you'd like to join the club he's going to start," Lemuel said, cautiously.

"Club? What sort of club?"

"It's not really a club. It's a straight-out Bible class. And he wants you in it. What do you say?"

"I say I'm coming. A preacher who can set type with the best of them can teach me Bible or anything else he pleases!"

V

THE FISHERMEN

WHY are you bothering us with letters this way?" Mr. Lumly greeted Ostend at the church on Sunday morning. "Isn't this town small enough for you to cover it on your feet? When you have a message for us, it would go down much better if you would deliver it yourself. I hope you won't turn into one of those letter-writing parsons. We had one once, and we don't want to see his like again. He was always asking for money. We thought we were well rid of his sort. And here you begin writing duns. We don't feel that is a preacher's work. Business life gives us enough of that sort of thing. Don't make a nuisance of yourself."

The bad taste left in his mouth by Mr. Lumly was dissipated after morning service when four young men greeted him at the Sunday school.

"Yes, we've come for that Bible class," Lemuel Galton said.

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"What sort of Bible class shall we have?"

"There's only one sort, isn't there? We've never cried for that sort, either, I must say. But we'll stand for it if you'll teach us."

"How would you like it this morning if I tell you of another sort of class than the one you have in mind, a class I belonged to before I went away from home? There was as fine a bunch of fellows in it as you could find anywhere. They called themselves 'The Fishermen.' They fished for me, too, and they caught me, though I had said I never would go to Sunday school again.

"I remember the first Sunday I spent with them and the things they talked about —the fellows who were sick, and those who needed a word of cheer. I remember how the president, in the midst of a talk to the class, stopped a moment to drop his hand affectionately on the shoulder of a man near him and say: 'They tell me your sister took first prize at the Boston Conservatory last week. Good for her, and good for you! It must be great to have a sister.' Pretty soon he sat down and another fellow

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got up. He began just as if he was talking on every-day matters—the life of the boys in business, the problems they had to solve, the things they hoped for the future. Suddenly, after about five minutes, I found he was teaching the Sunday-school lesson; he was telling us about the way Jesus helped men who brought problems to him. Sometimes the fellows talked, too. Any one could say a thing when he felt like it. The half-hour seemed like ten minutes. It made a fellow feel as if he wanted that sort of thing just as often as he could get it.

"They asked me if I would come back next Sunday. 'Come back?' I said. 'You couldn't keep me away. I'm going home now to see what kind of book the Bible is, anyway. I've never paid any attention to it; didn't know it had anything to do with the printing-office.'"

"Wish we could have a class like that!" Mark Mayhew broke in. "I know three fellows I could get for it, and I'm going to ask them to come."

"And I know some more." Albert Jenkins was just as eager.

"Think I can find some," Tom Murphy chimed in.

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"You needn't think you're the only fellows who have friends." Lemuel Galton had been busy writing on the back of an envelope while his companions were speaking. "I have five names here. Maybe some of them are duplicates of some you have in mind. So much the better! No one wants a monopoly in asking others to come to a good thing like our class."

"The Membership Committee seems to have appointed itself, and you are all members," Ostend said, smiling. "But we must have a president before we have committees. The Fishermen must be fully manned. No, thank you," as Lemuel and Mark suggested that he was the man for president. "You must have some one who lives right with the fellows.

"Mark Mayhew is nominated. Any other nomination? Then, shall we make his election unanimous? All in favor say 'Aye!' Mr. President, I am glad to resign the chair to you."

Other officers were named promptly, and the Membership, Devotional, Missionary and Social Committees were appointed. Ostend was asked to be teacher. The class was named "The Fishermen." The motto

chosen was, "From henceforth ye shall catch men."

"Every man is an officer; every one of us is on at least two committees!" the president said, as the session closed. "Let's have things different next Sunday. This class ought to double its membership the first week. I say that unless we have ten men here next Sunday we're failures. We all think alike, too, don't we?"

That evening, as Ostend was getting ready for bed, and thinking gratefully of the events of the day, there was a knock at his door.

"Mrs. Goforth told me to come right up," his visitor said, when he had responded to the hearty "Come in."

"Good for you, Mayhew! This is the sort of thing I like. Glad to see you. Come to talk about the class?"

"Yes, and no. You see, we fellows had a meeting this afternoon and they asked me to have a talk with you to-night."

"Another meeting already? The Fishermen do not seem to be losing time, do they?"

"It wasn't about our work, though, Mr. Ostend."

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There was a pause. It was evident the visitor was embarrassed; he twisted his hat in his hand and looked in a confused manner at the carpet.

"Was it a secret? Or do you want me to know what is in the wind?"

"Yes, you'll have to know. There isn't any secret. We were talking about you. It's this way. You are up against about the hardest proposition a minister was ever asked to tackle, and we don't feel that it's fair to let you go on without knowing all about it. You know what the town is like; you told us you were brought up only twenty miles from here. But you don't know that they are intending to let you stay here only three or four months till a nephew of Mr. Lumly comes home from Europe; he has been studying there, and is going to spend the winter here. He belongs to another church, but Mr. Lumly thinks he can preach here as well as any one."

"And that isn't all. They're saying lots of things behind your back, as they have done with every minister who has been here since I can remember, and there have been a lot of them. But we fellows think you ought to know, so you can leave before

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they get a summer's hard work out of you, and then ask you to leave.

"You won't misunderstand us, I know. We don't want you to go. You made life seem different to us during that hour in Sunday school. I don't know what we'll do without you. But it isn't fair to ask a man to handicap himself as you would if you should stay in Harmony Center. I'm speaking for the whole class. We'll miss you a lot, but we'd like to see you take the train to-morrow.

"That's all, Mr. Ostend. It's been awfully hard to say this. But it had to be said." Without another word he was gone.

Ostend did not sleep much that night. He wondered what he ought to do. He did not like to give up his work so soon; all afternoon he had been dreaming of the things he thought he could do, by God's help, with The Fishermen as associates. Now his dreams were gone. Perhaps he had better go, too!

On Monday morning he took a long walk into the country. He thought of his problem on all sides. He prayed for guidance. At last he threw himself for a rest on the side of a haystack in a meadow

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by the roadside. There he continued to think until he fell asleep.

It was evening before he was back in Harmony Center. Mr. Lumly saw him hurrying down the business street and called to him.

"There's a meeting at my place to-night — a few of the men from the church. We're going to talk finance. Come around if you like."

Two hours later Ostend found three men at Mr. Lumly's store. They greeted him half-heartedly. Mr. Lumly stated the object of the meeting.

"It's about a home-mission committee letter," he began. "This morning the chairman wrote that he can't send us the money until we finish our subscription-list. He says they have a new rule; the list must show that the members are giving an average of five dollars each before a grant can be paid. That looks to me like a rather shabby way of treating a church that's been friends of the home missions for so many years. They might wait on us. I told them it wasn't our fault the list hadn't been finished. I said we had made two attempts, and things seemed against us."

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"It wouldn't take long to finish the list, would it?" Ostend asked.

"Oh, we couldn't go around now. The people expect to see the man along in April or May. It's June now, and they wouldn't pay any attention to him. We'll just have to get on the best we can. Of course, you won't expect us to do as much as we told you we might. Maybe six dollars a week will be about the limit from now on, though we may be able to pay seven."

Dejectedly Ostend left the store. Surely this was an indication that he had been wrong in his decision to remain.

"At any rate, the question has been decided otherwise for me," he thought. "I'll send a letter right now to Professor Thompson. Perhaps he'll have a suggestion."

Two days later came a telegram:

"Go to Archwood Saturday. Logan Church needs a minister instantly."

The message was delivered Thursday morning. At the prayer-meeting that evening Ostend thought he would tell Mr. Lumly of his intention to leave on Saturday. Mr. Lumly seldom attended the prayer-meeting, but Ostend would send him word that he

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had something important to say to the people.

In the afternoon he called on Mrs. Galton. He found her radiant.

"I'm so glad the pain is not so great to-day," he greeted her. "You don't need to tell me. I see it in your face."

"It isn't the pain," the invalid said. "I've forgotten about that. It's my boy. Lemuel is so different. He talks about you every time he comes about the house. Last Sunday he was full of that Bible class. Mr. Ostend, you're a genius. God has a great work for you to do here. Every hour I thank him that you were sent to us."

He could not tell her of his decision.

From Mrs. Galton's home he went directly to his room. For four hours he was alone with God. Finally he went out with quickened step and made his way to Mark Mayhew's home.

"He's out at the barn," Mrs. Mayhew said. "Let me send for him."

"No, let me go there!" Ostend was already on his way to the man he wanted to see alone.

He found Mayhew standing by his pony, which was eating oats from his hand.

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"Come to tell me about that telegram, Mr. Ostend?" was Mayhew's greeting. "I know about it—news has a way of getting around to us newspaper fellows, you see. I am glad you are going—glad for your sake, that is. But how we'll miss you!"

"Yes, I got a message this morning, Mayhew. But the answer won't be what you think. I am on my way to the office with this word:

"'Can't go to Logan. Must stay Harmony Center. See letter.'"

"Why, what does that mean, Mr. Ostend? Things haven't changed. I happen to know they're worse than ever."

"I don't care about the things I was bothering about before. It's folks I care for—you men of The Fishermen's Class, and those we are going to work for together, Mayhew. I'm going to stay with you, if you'll have me."

"Have you! If I had my way, you'd never leave us."

And the young man threw his arms about his pony's neck and hugged him. His feelings had to find an outlet.

"Well, I must get on to the telegraph office," Ostend said in some embarrassment.

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He was going out of Mayhew's front gate when he found himself face to face with one whose face was fixed in his mind. One sight of her had made him wish for more.

"The Girl with the Pitcher!" he said, unconsciously. "Where did you come from?"

VI

A COMMISSION

THE Girl looked at Ostend. Ostend looked at her. Then she laughed. He laughed with her.

"I suppose I ought to remind you that we have never met," she said, when she could control herself.

"Was there ever such a voice as hers!" Ostend thought.

"But what is the need of an introduction! I know who you are. You are the man who spilled my milk. You didn't watch where you were going. You didn't see me!"

"Well, I have paid for it. I haven't seen any girl since. I tried hard to learn your name. I didn't succeed. But I've often thought I'd like to collide with you again!"

"So that's how earnest you were when you begged my pardon! You'd like to do it again! Well, I'm not going to give you the chance. Milk is too precious to be

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spilled by a heedless man mooning along the street as you were that day."

"I beg your pardon. I didn't mean—I meant—I would like— Oh, I can't say what I mean. Anyway, won't you tell me where I can see you? Who will introduce us? I know some people in the village. They will vouch for me."

"Do you know my aunt, Mrs. Mayhew? Yes? Well, I may be at home to-morrow evening if you should happen to come to see—Mrs. Mayhew!"

With a smile and a wave of the hand she left him and hurried into the house.

Ostend found it difficult to do his work on Friday. As he studied, the face of the Girl with the Pitcher would obtrude itself, interfering with his thoughts and making sermon preparation impossible. At ten o'clock he decided it was useless to attempt to work longer. Yet he remained at his desk, for in the seminary he had made up his mind to spend the morning hours in study six days every week. He must not break his rule.

Finally, at eleven o'clock, he gave up and went out on the street. He wanted to go past the Mayhews' home, but his will

was strong enough to send him in the opposite direction.

That day he did not go home for lunch: With a package put up for him at the bakery, he walked into the country. Finding a pleasant spot on the bank of the Rendorp, he ate his lunch, and then spent an hour thinking of the Girl with the Pitcher.

"Time to go calling!" he reminded himself at last. "I wish Mrs. Mayhew was on my list for this afternoon. I wish I didn't have any calls to make. I wish she was out here right now. I wish—I wish—oh, I wish Harmony Center had a parsonage!"

"Nonsense!" he thought. "What good would a parsonage here do you? Don't forget what you heard about Mr. Lumly's nephew. Maybe they'll fix up a parsonage for him. I wonder—"

He stopped short for a moment. He had thought of a terrible possibility. "I wonder if he knows her? He's been visiting here. She's probably been here many times. Perhaps they met here. He must have seen her. I know he liked her; he couldn't help it. And my chance was gone before I knew her!"

"What is the matter with you?" he

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asked the question aloud. "What have you to do with her, anyway? She is out of your reach, at any rate. Now behave yourself and go back to work."

That afternoon as he made his rounds it was surprising how often he thought of an errand that would take him in the direction of the Mayhew home. Every time he gripped the temptation, and throttled it.

"Now I am free to go!" he decided, that evening at eight o'clock. And he did not lose much time on the way.

Mrs. Mayhew seemed surprised to see him. "Was Mark expecting you?" she asked. "He'll be sorry he missed you. Perhaps you'll find him at the office. I know he works at night, sometimes."

Ostend explained that he had not come to see Mark. "I just thought I would drop in," he said. "You know last night I was so anxious to see Mark I spent all my time at the barn and neglected you."

"Yes? Well, I'm sure it is good of you to think of me."

Then there was silence. Ostend wondered what to say next. Should he ask for Mrs. Mayhew's niece? He did not know her name. He couldn't ask for the Girl

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with the Pitcher. Mrs. Mayhew would think him out of his mind. Besides, that was his own private name for her. He wondered if he would ever be able to tell her about it. He wondered—

He had no time to wonder further, for the door opened and the Girl herself was on the threshold.

"My niece, Grace Dysart, Mr. Ostend. Miss Dysart comes from Andean. Mr. Ostend is our new minister."

Ostend was about to say something about their previous meeting when a warning look from Miss Dysart checked his words. Demurely she held out her hand.

"I am glad to meet you, Mr. Ostend," she said.

The call proved to be quite a formal affair. Miss Dysart let Mrs. Mayhew and the minister do most of the talking. In vain Ostend hoped for a few minutes alone with the niece. The aunt seemed to have no idea of leaving the room.

Finally Ostend rose to go.

"Will you take him to the door, Grace? I am really too tired to get up."

So they had their private talk, after all.

"I knew who you were all the time,"

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Miss Dysart said. "I was present when you were ordained."

"I looked for you all over the town."

"I sat right behind you in the choir. A big, friendly palm was a screen. When you turned round you couldn't see me. But I saw you. You were the most embarrassed young man I ever saw."

"I would have been still more embarrassed if I had known you were looking through those palm branches." Ostend laughed happily.

"There's something I want to talk to you about. Shall we walk down to the gate?"

"It is about Mark. His mother used to be troubled about him. When I was here last summer she talked to me many times about his careless ways. So you can imagine how surprised and pleased I was to-day when she told me that there has been a change in him this last week. You know what I mean. You have had a good deal to do with it. Do you know what he is doing to-night? He isn't at the printing-office. He is out doing what he can to keep his promise to you to double the membership of The Fishermen by Sunday. He told me

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all about it; he and I are quite confidential. He has told me a good many things: you don't know how much I know about you, sir. In fact, I felt quite safe in asking you to call.

"There is one thing that bothers him. I spoke to him about coming into the Church. He said he wouldn't do it—at any rate, not until some things are different. I know what he meant—the breach between Mr. Lumly and Amanda Spillway. You have heard about it, of course. They say it is hopeless to bring them together. Yet if the church is to do any good, they must get together. Do you know, there has not been an accession to the membership for three years? Think of that!"

"Thank you for telling me," Ostend said. "But what do you suppose I can do? It is hopeless to bring them together."

"You couldn't do a better thing than to persuade those two people to see that they are standing in the way of progress."

"How could I hope to do such a thing, when so many others have failed?"

"I don't know how you are to do it. But I think you will."

Then she held out her hand. He held

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it a moment. Strength seemed to pass to him with the pressure.

"It's a big contract she has given me. But I must not fail her. And I must not fail God. I believe he wants me to do this, and that she is speaking for him."

He thought of the task she had set for him. But, to tell the truth, he thought still more of the girl who had set the task, and of his hopes for the future.

"What if I had decided to go away from Harmony Center?" he asked himself with a start. "I might never have met her again! All the more reason for doing my best for Him who brings things about in his own way."

On Saturday he decided to give up his study hours and call on Mr. Lumly and Miss Spillway. "I didn't study yesterday, and I can't study to-day," he thought. "On Sunday morning I must just use an old sermon."

Before leaving the room he asked for guidance in the work he was about to undertake.

"O God!" he prayed, "this is thy work. I don't know how to do it. But use me and keep me from making mistakes."

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At Mr. Lumly's store he was told the merchant was at home, sick.

"Rather poor prospect, I am afraid," was his rueful thought. "He won't want to talk to me, but I'll go to see him, at any rate."

Mr. Lumly welcomed him cordially. "Just a bit of rheumatism," he explained. "I can't get out, so it is good to have some one to talk to. Hope you can stay awhile."

For fifteen minutes Ostend talked of indifferent matters. Then he realized that he must explain the object of his visit, if he was to be true to his purpose.

"Mr. Lumly, I've been looking up the records, and I am grieved to see that we haven't had an accession to the church for more than three years. I am longing to see some new members come to us soon."

"That would be fine. It's pretty hard to raise money from the same old crowd. Some of us ought to have a relief."

Ostend realized that this was not a good beginning. He tried again.

"I know several who ought to come into the church, and I believe they will, if—"

"That's what all our pastors have said. Members will come, if this and if that. To

A Commission

my way of thinking, that 'if' is in the minister. Members are sure to come if the minister does the work he is paid to do."

"No, Mr. Lumly, that isn't the only 'if.' There's just as big an 'if' that the members are responsible for."

"So? How do you make that out? What's my responsibility, for instance? Don't I keep the church money? Don't I stand by the preacher? What would the church do without me?"

"Mr. Lumly, I know a young man who would come into the church if you would take a stumbling-block out of his way."

"I? What do you mean?"

"While you and Miss Spillway don't speak, how is it possible to expect God to bless this church?"

"You forget yourself, sir! That is my private affair. Who gave you the right—"

"Mr. Lumly, there is a mother in Harmony Center who has been grieving for her son. Lately he has begun to take an interest in the church. But he won't go any further, and you're to blame. I don't mean to excuse him, but I must speak to you."

"I—you—no one ever—the idea—" Mr. Lumly made several efforts to speak,

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and then fell back in his chair, exhausted.

"You had better go!" he said, when he had recovered himself. "I might say something I'll be sorry for. If you know what's good for you, you'll never introduce the subject again. Better let sleeping dogs lie. There's more back of this than you think. I never thought the day would come when a young whippersnapper from the seminary would speak to me in such a way."

"Here, I'm beginning again. Good-by, Mr. Ostend. I'll be glad to see you on any other errand. You know that."

"I've made a botch of that," Ostend reflected, when he had found his way to the street. "I might have known that this would be the result. But I had to try."

He turned as he heard some one running behind him.

When he saw Reuben Lumly hurrying toward him and beckoning to him, he began to fear the worst.

"Can it be that something is wrong? Have I caused him to have a stroke of apoplexy? Did I say too much?"

"Father wants you, Mr. Ostend. He says he must see you right away."

VII

THE FIRST VICTORY

M R. OSTEND, I want to ask your pardon," Mr. Lumly said, before the young minister was fairly inside the room. "I was wrong to speak to you as I did. It is not my private affair that I am not on speaking terms with Amanda Spillway. I have tried to justify myself, but I know now that I was to blame all the time. No one ever had the courage to speak to me as you have done. I am glad you came.

"Now, will you go to Amanda Spillway and tell her that if this rheumatism will let me get out of the house, I'm coming to see her this afternoon? Then, will you come back and tell me what she says?

"You've done a big thing for me to-day. You've shown me just what I am—an old hypocrite, putting stumbling-blocks in the way of the very young people I thought I was such an example to. I don't wonder our pastors haven't been able to bring any new members into the Church. There was

too big an ‘if’ in the way—and I was that ‘if.’ Please God, I won’t be any longer. Pastor, will you give me your hand?”

The hearty handclasp gave Ostend assurance that he had made a friend.

“Now for Miss Spillway,” he thought. “Unless I’m much mistaken, there will be a hard task ahead of me there.”

The hostess seemed surprised to receive a call from her pastor on Saturday morning, but she dropped her work and showed him into the sitting-room.

As at Mr. Lumly’s house, the first minutes were spent in general conversation.

“This is wasting precious time,” Ostend decided. “I have been trying to think of a way to lead up to the subject. The best way will be to say what I have to say at once.

“I have just come from Mr. Lumly,” he began.

At once there was a change in the atmosphere. The cordiality of Miss Spillway disappeared.

“Perhaps you do not know that the name you just spoke has not been mentioned in this house for three years. I must pardon you, of course. But that man

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and I do not speak. Three years ago his wife said—”

“Please, Miss Spillway, do not tell me anything about it now. I must be allowed to talk to my people about things I have been thinking. Bear with me a little while I talk on a forbidden subject. As I said, I have just been to Mr. Lumly’s—”

As before, Miss Spillway stiffened, then half rose from her chair.

“No, Miss Spillway, please hear me out. I have a message for you from Mr. Lumly.”

“For me? He sent a message to me?”

“Yes, he sent me here this morning.”

“Glory be! I said he’d have to speak to me first.”

“Now, Miss Spillway, you mustn’t look at it in that way. This is too serious a matter. I went to Mr. Lumly to tell him that I know of at least one earnest young man who would like to come into the Church, but he feels he can not do it while certain things are going on among some of the attendants. You know as well as I do that he does not take the right attitude: our responsibility to do the right thing does not depend on the success or failure of some one else to do what is right. But surely

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we can sympathize with him, can't we?

"Well, when I told Mr. Lumly about this young man, he seemed sorry to think that he was a stumbling-block in any one's way, and he asked me to tell you that, if his rheumatism lets him walk, he wants to come around to see you this afternoon."

For a moment Miss Spillway said nothing. Then she rose.

"Sit right there, Pastor," she said. "I've got to go upstairs a bit. There are some things I can't do except in my own room. I'll be down after awhile. But I've got to have time."

The time seemed long to the waiting minister. Somehow, he felt that the woman had gone to her room to pray. He prayed for her and for Mr. Lumly, for the church and for the men of The Fishermen's Class.

Twenty minutes passed before Miss Spillway returned. He rose and met her at the door.

"You go just as quick as you can and tell Mr. Lumly that if he isn't able to get here by two o'clock, I'm coming down there to see about it. Tell him to bring Mrs. Lumly along. I want to talk to them both.

"I don't see how I can hold in that long.

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And you tell that young man the stumbling-blocks are all out of his way—that is, if he was honest in saying that but for us he would come into the Church."

Ostend felt as if he were walking on air, all the way back to Mr. Lumly's.

"What did she say?" the victim of rheumatism asked from his chair.

The message was delivered.

"Then, rheumatism, or no rheumatism, I'm going right now!" he said.

"Lizzie! Lizzie! Where are you? Come with me down to 'Mandy Spillway's. She wants us, and we want her."

Mrs. Lumly came in a hurry. "Why, what do you mean? You are ready to go to her house after all you've said?"

"I've got to go, and right away. It's a shame the way I've been acting."

Mrs. Lumly turned to the minister with tears in her eyes. "God bless you, Mr. Ostend! I've been trying to bring him to see reason for three long years, and he shut me up every time I mentioned her name. You have done this. How you have done it I don't know. But I thank God you ever came to Harmony Center."

"I thank him, too, Mrs. Lumly. But I

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didn't do it. If you had heard the blundering way I went about it, you would have thought I was going to ruin everything. I am as much surprised as you are. To think that God should use my poor efforts!"

"Now I can prepare a sermon for tomorrow," he thought, joyfully, as he sought his room. "No calling for me this afternoon. I don't want to see any one till I go to the social at the Lumly's to-night."

He arrived at the social a little late. He had been so interested in his sermon he had let the appointed hour go by.

"But the sermon is ready," he thought, gratefully. "And I feared I would have to use one of those wretched seminary sermons."

There was an air of suppressed excitement at the social. People were talking together with animation; no one looked bored, as he had seen them at the other church socials. Every few minutes some woman would tiptoe to the door leading to the kitchen, open it a crack, peep in, then nod her head, shut the door, and return to the group she had left. At once the talk would become even more animated than before.

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Whenever Ostend approached one of the groups restraint seemed to come over them. It was evident that the all-absorbing topic of conversation was changed for his benefit.

"Every one seems to be in some secret but me, Miss Dysart," he said, with an injured air, when he came across the Girl with the Pitcher. "What is all the mystery? Who has been doing what? Won't you satisfy the curiosity of a mere man?"

"You ask who has been doing what, do you, you wizard? I'm afraid I'll have to call you Mr. Innocence. You have seen the women peeping in at the kitchen door? Would you like a peep, too? Now, don't think it is beneath your dignity; it won't hurt you to do as the rest of them are doing. Come on."

So the door was opened for him. He did not know what to expect. But he did not expect to see an every-day kitchen interior, with absolutely nothing remarkable in the room.

"What do you think of that?" Miss Dysart smiled at him.

"What do I think of what? I didn't see anything except two women washing

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dishes. Nothing remarkable about that! Oh, yes! there was a man wiping dishes. But there's nothing remarkable in that. I've wiped dishes many a time for mother."

"Oh, you poor innocent! Who are the women, and who is the man?"

"Why, Mr. and Mrs. Lumly, and Miss Amanda Spill— So, that's it, is it? Strange I didn't think of it! They've been in my thoughts all day, too. I'm afraid I am a little dull."

"Dull! Don't talk about being dull when you have done something no one thought could be done. I didn't dream of success like this when I told you last night what you had to do. I tried to act confident of the result, but I fear I made a sad failure of it."

"Not a bit of it. I wonder if I dare tell you that it was the thought of your confidence in me that nerved me to say what I could never have said if you hadn't set me on."

"You mean that? Well, then, I begin to think I ought to be glad you bumped into me that day at Andean. It is good to know that a useless creature such as I have been held to be can inspire a man to do

something worth while, even if she can do nothing herself."

"I'd like to say something about that."

"Would you? What is it? I'm listening."

Then, as she saw the look in the minister's eyes, she added quickly:

"No, don't say it now. Don't you see they are needing me in the other room?"

When the company separated at eleven o'clock, Ostend walked home with Miss Dysart. He tried to tell her what was on his tongue's end when she left him earlier in the evening, but she would not give him a chance.

She had said good-night and was opening the door when she turned for another word. "I wonder if you could come round Monday evening? I have a plan to talk over with you."

VIII

FOUR MEN FOR ONE HUNDRED DOLLARS

ON Sunday morning Ostend preached an inspiring sermon, but it was nothing to the sermon without words preached by the occupants of the Lumly pew. On one side of Mrs. Lumly sat her husband, on the other side was Amanda Spillway.

"And to think that they have passed each other by as if they had never seen each other!" a woman whispered to her neighbor. "Remember the first time you came to church, when you actually tried to introduce 'Mandy to Mr. Lumly? You thought they were strangers because they passed in the aisle without speaking. Well, that's all over now—just one thing less to talk about."

"But do you suppose it will last?" the neighbor responded. "Seems to me they're going about it in a little too much of a hurry. To my way of thinking, you ought to go at a thing like that kind of gradual.

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I never did think much of friendships that were made too quick, and I feel it is the same way in making over friendships."

It did not appear that the feeling of the critic was shared by others. After service there was a reception at the Lumly pew. This lasted so long that Sunday school began late.

Twelve men greeted Mr. Ostend as he took his place with the class in the little room at the rear of the pulpit recess, to which the class had decided to retire. President Mayhew took the chair.

"Fellows," he began, "I guess you'll be surprised at what I'm going to say. This morning I have been taken off my feet. Some of you know I have said I had no use for a church that had in it people who wouldn't speak when they passed each other. You know whom I meant. I even said last week, when one of you asked me to come into the Church, I would be glad to do it when Mr. Lumly and Miss Spillway began to speak to each other. I thought I was safe in saying that. Who thought they would ever get together!"

"Now it is up to me. Some of you were at church and saw who sat in the

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Lumly pew. The unbelievable has happened. You know I'm not a fellow to go back on my word. If they'll have me in the Church, I'm going to join the first chance they give me. I wish you would all stand up with me in this."

Then followed the lesson, a few minutes of good fellowship, and the agreement of the five charter members and the five new members who were voted in that day, to double the attendance the following Sunday.

"The Membership Committee has been busy, I see," Ostend said, approvingly. "There's nothing like having every man on that committee. I hope you'll all feel you are to work under Chairman Murphy this week."

"Can't we have a business meeting this week? How about to-morrow evening?" Lemuel Galton suggested.

"Could you make it Tuesday evening? I have an engagement to-morrow evening, and I'd like to be with you at your first business session."

So it was arranged. The meeting was to be held in Ostend's room.

"And then we'll go down to the ice-cream parlor. How about it?"

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Tom Murphy's suggestion received hearty approval, and accordingly a committee was appointed to make the arrangements.

On Monday evening, when Mr. Ostend knocked at the Mayhews' door, Grace Dysart greeted him.

"We're to have the sitting-room to ourselves to-night," she explained, as she led the way in. "Mrs. Mayhew is upstairs with the children. Mark is out on business for that wonderful Bible class.

"Tell me what you have been doing to those boys, Mr. Ostend," she continued. "I'm beginning to be afraid of you. Just to think what you have done with one of the town's pet institutions, the feudists of years' standing! Now you begin to twist the young men around your fingers. Actually, Cousin Mark is ready to do exactly what you tell him. You must be one of those masterful men we read about. I've never seen one before. Tell me the secret. I'd like to be able to wrap folks about my finger."

Ostend did not think it the time to tell her that she had wrapped him about her finger the first time he saw her. "May the

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time come to tell her so!" he breathed the wish.

"I'm not doing anything with those boys," he explained. "They're doing something with me. It is wonderful to see their enthusiasm and to follow them in their work. The Fishermen are getting busy with a vengeance. To-morrow evening they are to have their first business meeting. I wish I had something to suggest to them for a month's work. They do not seem to want to wait till fall, but feel they must improve the summer."

"And why not?" his companion asked. "Isn't there something they can do now? What is the principal need of this church?"

"To get the respect of the community."

"How did it lose that respect?"

"For one thing, by failing to pay its bills. I have learned that half the merchants of the town have little accounts against us. The gas bill hasn't been paid for six months. Mr. Armitage told me to-day he hasn't had a cent for last winter's coal. They are behind four months with Mr. Galton's pay. The tinner who repaired the roof last fall hasn't seen a cent of the church's money. The carpenter who

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built the new coal-shed hasn't been paid for the lumber. And so it goes."

"You think the first thing is to pay debts? What next?"

"Well, the next thing after being just is being generous. There doesn't seem to be such a thing as generosity in this church. I understand that last year's foreign missionary offering amounted to three dollars and thirty-five cents."

"Then, wouldn't that be a good place to begin? I mean, of course, after the debts are paid? Well, how about giving three weeks' time to a campaign for cash, and three weeks to a canvass for members? I know you feel you haven't a right to look for members till you pay your debts and give some decent amount to those who need what we can do."

"I like your program, and I believe I'll put it up to the men to-morrow night. How would you suggest that we go about the double campaign?"

"Wouldn't it be just as well to get the men to make their own suggestions? Of course, I'd be glad to talk it over with you at any time," she added, as she noted Ostend's look of disappointment. "But let's

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not make the mistake of taking things out of the hands of The Fishermen. I think you have a mighty weapon in that class. Make the most of it."

"Would you like to hear about the meeting?"

"Surely."

"Then, may I come Wednesday evening and tell you about it?"

"Oh, I guess so!" she agreed. "But you and your Fishermen mustn't take all my evenings."

Tuesday evening, Ostend borrowed chairs from all over the house, and the room looked inviting when the men gathered. All of the ten men were present. The five new members felt ill at ease at first, but this wore off before many minutes; Ostend's genial presence and tactful ways disarmed the criticism of all those who had been reluctant to spend an evening with a preacher.

"Well, let's get down to business," the president said, at last. "We haven't been running long enough to spend much time in report-making. The Membership Committee made its report yesterday, so I guess there is nothing new to say—"

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"Yes, there is!" Chairman Murphy interrupted. "We have the promise of three more fellows for next Sunday, and the two who didn't join yesterday are asking to be taken in. I move that Art Peebles and Don Weaver be made Fishermen."

"Has the Social Committee anything to report?"

"Our report will be made at the ice-cream parlor at the close of this meeting," said the chairman.

"How about the Devotional-Missionary Committee?"

"The devotional work is going on all right. We have arranged for Thursday night's prayer-meeting. Come and see what you will see. As for the missionary work, we haven't got busy yet. I'd like to have our pastor suggest something to do."

"I shall be glad to do that," Ostend said, "but first I want to speak of something that may not sound much like missionary work, though it is a necessary preliminary." Then he explained about the bills standing against the church, and suggested that a special committee be appointed to see the officers and ask for authority to gather the bills and collect money to pay them.

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"When that is done, what do you say to showing the people of Harmony Center that there isn't any fun like giving away money? Last year, our small church gave a little more than three dollars to missions. This year I would like to see one hundred dollars raised for missions. That sum will pay for four native workers who give their full time to Christian work—one in China, one in India, one in Korea and one in Africa. What do you think of adding the four men to our class pay-roll?"

"Four men for one hundred dollars? I say it would be a pity not to jump at a bargain like that. I want to give five dollars toward the hundred." It was Albert Jenkins who made the subscription.

Within two minutes more than a third of the fund was subscribed. Then, amid much enthusiasm, The Fishermen adjourned.

Gladly the officers of the church gave the desired permission to conduct the financial campaign. Within a week, every bill owed by the church was paid. Merchants asked each other, "What's doing over at the First Church?" "I had about made up my mind to charge off that coal bill," one of them said. "And I was ready

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to discount the gas bill fifty per cent. for cash," said another. "I hope this keeps up," said a third. "Anyway, it looks now as if we couldn't throw any more stones at the First Church; we mustn't say again that they don't pay their debts."

Then the missionary campaign was begun. Of course, the committee heard many discouraging words. "Don't you know that we won't have enough left to pay our home bills if you pay for four men on the other side of the earth?" "Here's a dollar, but the Lord won't bless it, because there isn't a prayer with it. I don't believe in foreign missions, but I do believe in you boys." "Will two dollars help out?" asked a woman who made a poor living by sewing. "Sorry I can't give any more; maybe I can next year."

The committee decided to postpone till near the end of the canvass their call on Azariah Stone. They thought they would have a better chance with him if the amount was almost all in hand when he was approached.

At last the paper showed ninety-five dollars. "Mr. Stone ought to give us that last five dollars; let's ask him for it," the

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chairman said to the member who was working with him on the closing day of the campaign.

"You say you've got all but five dollars of what will pay for your Chinaman, your Korean, your Indian and your African? Work for twenty-five dollars a year each, eh? More fools they! No, I won't give you a cent to make up the sum."

His visitors' faces fell at the words. But they brightened again at Mr. Stone's next remark.

"But I'll tell you what you do. When you get that hundred dollars made up, you come to me and tell me if you can put a fellow to work over in Siam for another twenty-five dollars. If you can, I'll write you a check. No, don't thank me. I always have been interested in those fellows since I got this comfortable Bangkok hat."

"Now for the next thing!" President Mayhew said to the committee, when they made their report. "This is getting interesting!"

IX

FISHING

WE haven't had a member added to the Church in more than three years," Ostend explained at the next business meeting of The Fishermen. "I believe we are going to have some soon. Everything points that way. There is a better spirit in the church. Your debt-raising campaign has helped. And now that we have sent one hundred and twenty-five dollars for foreign missionary work, I think the prospects are all the brighter.

"I want to ask the help of you fellows to canvass the town for new members as faithfully as you canvassed for money. If I can have frequent conferences with you, I shall be glad. Call on me for any help I can give you. What do you say?"

"I say, let's drop all the class activities, except the meeting for Bible study, and be real Fishermen," Lemuel Galton proposed.

Mark Mayhew was on his feet instantly.

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"I second that motion," he said. "And that I may be in better shape to do the work, I want to tell Mr. Ostend now that I wish to become a member of the Church at once."

Ostend reached over and shook Mayhew's hand. The men who sat by his side gave him similar greeting.

"That means four of our men are confessed disciples of Christ," Ostend said. "The burden of the work this month will fall on these four men. But we can't get along without one of you."

"Will you count me the fifth, Mr. Ostend?" Lemuel Galton said. "I, too, want to become a member of the Church."

"Suppose we make a list of those we are going to talk to," the president suggested. "Then, we might go over the list and divide it among us."

The suggestion was adopted. Two hours were spent in discussion. Then the class adjourned, "to meet one week from to-night," a member said. "We can't put off the next meeting a whole month."

Ostend had a busy week, and was unable to talk to the men about their work till the time set for the meeting.

"Let's hear from the members of the committee," the president invited. "Galton, how about your man? You were to see Hepworth, I believe."

"I had a hard time seeing him," was the reply. "Mrs. Hepworth told me he had grown shy of our Bible-class fellows; we've been after him so much. But I made an appointment for the evening. He failed to be on hand. I tried again next day. A third time I failed. 'You'll just have to go where he is,' she said to me. 'Where is that?' I asked. 'He's working on the new church,' she said. You know, fellows, he's a carpenter. 'Then I'll go there for him,' I said. When I asked for him at the church they said he was up at the very tiptop of the steeple—up more than a hundred and fifty feet. 'Can I get up there?' I asked. 'If you can climb ladders,' the foreman said. 'Is it important enough to take the risk?' 'Sure it is,' I said. 'Then up you go!' Now, I am apt to lose my head on a ladder that goes straight up, as those ladders on the steeple do. But I wasn't going to be stumped. It was too important an occasion to worry about ladders. So up I went.

"At last I was on the last ladder. Hepworth heard me and looked around. 'What are you after?' he said. 'After you.' 'What for?' 'Couldn't get you any other way; I had to come up here.' 'But what do you want?' 'We want you in the First Church. Don't you think it is about time you were giving Christ a chance in your life?' 'You came up here to say that?' 'Yes.' 'Then all I have to say is, you might as well get down where it's safer standing. That ladder isn't as strong as it might be.'

"And what do you think, fellows? I did as he said. I lost my chance, and I haven't had another since. I'm afraid I'm a failure."

"The man given to me was John Bradley, of the ice-cream parlor, where we had our good time last month," Albert Jenkins began his report. "I talked to him for all I was worth. I thought I had him hooked, too, until he began to ask about Sunday. 'Wonder what you people would think of me if I kept open on Sunday? You know I do a big business that day. I might close in the morning, but in the afternoon and the evening I would have to be here.' Of course, I told him that we don't attempt to

run a man's private business, but I asked him if he thought more of his ice-cream business than he did of his soul. Before he answered some one came in the door. He was glad enough of the chance to get away from me. That is all I have done. I guess I, too, am a failure."

"I tried my man three times," a third report began. "He turned me down. I was ready to give up to-day, until a book-agent tried to sell me a volume. Three times I told him I didn't want it. I thought he would quit then. No, sir; he didn't. He came right back at me a fourth time. He sold me a book, too. And say, fellows, it's a right good book. I must show it to you when you're up at our house. I got something better than the book from him, though; he taught me perseverance. I'm going back for my man to-morrow."

After others had told their experience, they revised the list of names, and decided to renew the campaign as soon as possible.

Later that night, a man sought Ostend and asked him to go next day, with a funeral party, thirty miles across country. When he had learned particulars, he said he did not see how he could go. He had a number

of convincing reasons; he was too busy to be absent from his work the two days required by the overland journey; it would be far easier for some minister on the ground to serve; and the people who asked him to make the trip had no claim on the church. The last reason he stated as kindly and tactfully as possible, but he saw that the man took offense.

"You say you'll come to the service at the house, at any rate?" the man asked.
"I'm glad you can do that much for us."

Somehow, the decision did not satisfy him. He was tired, but he was unable to get to sleep. Always the request of his visitor came before him. He had no peace till he determined to revise his program. He would not content himself with the service at the house; he would take the long, hard trip.

"I wish you could go with us!" the widow said to him, next morning. "That service here was so helpful. If only we could have a minister from our own town at the cemetery."

"If it is still convenient for you, I can go," he said.

It was a hard journey. He rode in a

wagon with the widow, her two daughters and the husband of one of them. After lunch the passengers changed seats, so he had opportunity to become well acquainted with every one in the vehicle. When the cemetery was reached there was a delay of an hour before the service could go on. During this hour he had a long talk with the son, the man who had called for him. Next day he made the return journey with the second son-in-law.

"Two days gone!" he thought, regretfully. "And I haven't done one thing for our campaign."

First thing next day he went to the printing-office, to interview Mayhew's employer, the editor of the *Argus*. He found that man too busy to talk to him.

"Mayhew is sick, and my other man left me in the lurch to-day. The paper comes out to-morrow, or it should; I don't know how it can, with all the type we have to set. Six galleys must be ready before to-night."

"Cases full?" Ostend asked. "Yes, I see they are. No trouble about your six galleys. About twenty thousand ems, if I am not mistaken? I stump you to do half the

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trick to-day and I'll do the rest. Is it a go?"

"You mean you would—"

"I mean let's get to work."

"But your own work?"

"My work just now is to help you out. No printer can afford to let another printer suffer when he can prevent it."

"Wouldn't you like to move the stand back from the window? You can light this jet over here, if you want."

"Why so? Oh, I see. You want to spare me the necessity of working in the plate-glass window, right where anybody on the way to the post-office can see me? That's kind of you, but I'd rather stay over here; I like daylight better."

"But what will your people say?"

"If my people don't like to see me set type, they needn't look. Now let's get busy."

They were busy all day. At ten minutes past six the last bit of copy was taken from the hook. At half-past six the work was done.

The editor took a column rule and measured Ostend's galleys, and then his own.

"Just as I suspected," he said. "You

Fishing

are a faster workman than I; your string is longer than mine. Where did you learn?"

"Over in the printing-office at home. I worked there for four years during my high-school course. I had some work at college and seminary that kept me in practice. But we mustn't be too sure about who did the larger bit of work. The proof will tell the story. Let's read the proof before we go home. I believe in finishing up the job, especially when you are so near the time limit."

When the proofs were read and corrected, the editor compared them. "You have five less errors than I, and you did a thousand ems more! I take off my hat to you. I've said the last word about preachers who can't earn their salt at honest work."

"We were too busy to say a word about what was in my mind when I went to the *Argus* office," Ostend thought, regretfully, as he went home. "But I did what I could."

He stopped to see Mayhew, after eating his delayed dinner.

"Sorry to hear you are laid up, old fellow," he said. "Hope you will be out soon."

"I'll be around to-morrow, I think,

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thank you. A sick headache laid hold of me to-day. They never last very long. I hate to think of the office. I fear they will be behindhand."

"Don't bother about that. It was your editor who told me you are sick, and he says everything is all right for to-morrow."

"Can't understand that," the compositor said, when Ostend had gone.

The minister had seen Grace Dysart passing the door, and he tried to get a word with her. He searched for her in vain, however, and was compelled to leave unsaid what he thought he must share with her.

"The time is nearly up," he thought, while on his way to his room. "I am sorry to say I know only of two or three who are coming in with us. I hope The Fishermen have done better than I. Next week will tell the tale."

X

SURPRISES

ON Friday Ostend planned to give the afternoon to a last canvass for recruits for the Church. That evening a special preparatory service was to be held. He knew that Saturday was always a bad day to see people, so he realized that this was practically his last chance. Perhaps, during four hours of the afternoon, he would be able to say the right thing to the right man, and persuade him to come out that night.

But his plans were interfered with once more. He had not been on the street ten minutes when a man from a poor section of the town stopped him. He had hoped to be able to do much work among the residents of "The Flats," on the lower end of the island, where this man made his home, but he had been too busy in other directions. The people there had no church of their own, and most of them were unwilling to come to church in the town; they seemed to

be suspicious of the pastors of the churches and their members.

"Our baby boy died last night," the man explained. "We have no money for the funeral. Can you help us? And can you come down and give us a little service?"

Ostend accompanied the man to Mr. Lumly and two or three other merchants, and secured funds for a plain casket. Then he arranged for the preparation of a little plot in the cemetery, and went with the father to the house on The Flats. The father carried the little casket; there was no money for an undertaker.

There was a brief, but tender, service at the house. At the close of the prayer Ostend paused for the closing of the casket. No notice was taken of him, however; the parents were too much occupied with their grief. As there was nothing for the minister to do but act as undertaker also, he carefully prepared the casket for the journey to the cemetery.

When his work was done he touched the father on the arm and said, "We are ready now, I think."

"How are we to go to the cemetery?" the dazed man asked.

Surprises

"I hadn't thought of that; wait a moment."

Hurrying to the street, he watched the road until a farmer drove by.

"I want your rig for an hour," he said to the surprised farmer. "They wish to take their babe to the cemetery, and they have no way to go. The father has to be his own undertaker."

"Of course you can have the buggy," the farmer said, and stepped to the ground. "I can carry my eggs from here to the store. I'll wait for you at Gill's grocery. You'll be there by five o'clock. That will be soon enough."

Into the house the minister went once more. He asked the father and mother to come with him; then he lifted the casket and led the way to the waiting vehicle.

This service of love took all the afternoon. "Again I must go to a meeting unprepared," he thought, sadly. "And the worst of it is, I know of only two or three who are to apply for admission to-night."

There were five who presented themselves when he gave the invitation, Mark Mayhew, Lemuel Galton, Amanda Spillway, and two young girls from the Sunday school.

"A good beginning," Mr. Lumly said, as he walked from the church with the pastor.

"I don't forget that it was your action that started things for them right, Mr. Lumly," Ostend reminded him.

"And I don't forget that it was my bull-headedness that blocked the way of people who, but for me, would have come into the Church," was the sadly-spoken reply.

Ostend was thankful for the five members who had prepared to come into the Church, but he was troubled as he thought of the failure of the efforts of The Fishermen. He had expected two or three more members as a result of their work. He knew they had been faithful; he had seen evidence of their work. Poor fellows! they would be sadly discouraged.

A second meeting for the reception of members had been announced for Sunday morning, an hour before the communion. "A mere form," Mr. Lumly had said, when the arrangement was made. "We can't expect any more than those who came out Friday night. But we'll give people a chance. Maybe there will be some one else, though I've never known anybody to

come to one of our meetings whom we didn't expect beforehand."

For ten minutes the officers waited with the pastor on Sunday morning. No one appeared.

"It's what might have been expected," Ezra La Place said.

He had hardly spoken when there was a knock at the door. Mr. Lumly opened it and disclosed Mr. and Mrs. Hepworth.

"Lem Galton is to blame for my being here," Mr. Hepworth explained. "I wouldn't give him a chance to see me. One day last week he made his chance, though." Then he told of the trip up the ladders to the top of the steeple. "Any man who will climb a hundred and fifty feet of ladders for me can have me."

"And I go where Nick goes," Mrs. Hepworth added.

Before they had been dismissed from the room there was another knock. This time it was John Bradley who sought admission to the Church. He told of Albert Jenkins' call. "I didn't give him any satisfaction, but I couldn't get away from what he said about my caring more for my ice-cream than I cared for my own soul.

The Sunday sale of ice-cream must stop."

Five others were waiting when John Bradley left the room. Ostend recognized them as the widow, the son, the two daughters, and one of the sons-in-law, whose acquaintance he had made during the two days' funeral trip of the week before. His heart was filled with thanksgiving as he heard them tell how his action in taking the hard trip, and his words on the way, had led them to the Church. "We meant to come Friday night," one of the daughters explained, "but mother was sick, and we didn't want to come without her."

"Eight to-day!" Mr. Lumly said, after looking at the record. "That will be about all. What a day this is!"

He was wrong. Another man waited without, the editor of the *Argus*. "Mark Mayhew has been urging me to come here with him. I didn't pay much attention to him; I had always said I had no use for preachers. But when Mr. Ostend spent a whole day setting type for me just to help me out of a pinch, I revised my ideas about ministers, and I decided my place is in the Church."

Then followed the father and mother

whose babe the minister had buried the day before.

"We always thought you had no place for the like of us here," the woman said. "But yesterday, after what Mr. Ostend did for us, we knew we were wrong."

It was the hour for service, and the meeting was about to adjourn, when three of the new members of The Fishermen came in. "The committee we appointed two weeks ago has been after us, and we come because we'd like to be real Fishermen next time there is work of that kind to do."

"There is always work of that kind," Ostend said to them. "What a splendid class we'll have to-day! Think of having five of you fellows coming into the Church at one time!"

That communion service was never forgotten by those present. The hymns, the Scripture reading, the prayers, the sermon, all seemed to have unusual power.

But the climax of the service came when, just before the breaking of the bread, Dr. Tibbits left his seat on one side of the church. At the same moment, as if a signal had been given, Hezekiah Smallridge started up the aisle. They came as near together

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as the communion table would permit. Reaching over this, these two, who had not spoken for years, clasped hands and bowed their heads.

"I didn't know I was going to do it," Dr. Tibbits said, after the service. "But when I saw Mark Mayhew stand up there, the words he spoke to me about forgetting grudges came to me so forcibly I couldn't keep still."

"Mark Mayhew was talking to me too," Mr. Smallridge chimed in. "I snubbed him when he came to me. But I thank God he had the courage to come."

"What a lot Mark Mayhew is responsible for!" Ostend said, thankfully.

"Don't you think The Fishermen have something to do with it? And how about the man who inspired The Fishermen?" Grace Dysart asked Ostend.

"We mustn't forget Him who has inspired us all!" the minister said, devoutly. "He has led us in a wonderful way. Only think how I was about to turn my back on all this because I thought Harmony Center was too hard a place for any minister!"

At the evening service a notice was handed to Ostend by Mr. Lumly. "Some of

us have been talking things over this afternoon, and we decided to ask for a meeting of the congregation to-morrow evening. Will you read this, please?"

Ostend wondered a little as to the object of the meeting; then he thought, "Oh, it's probably just to arrange a welcome for the new members." But when he came to the church on Monday evening he was surprised to hear Mr. Lumly's explanation of the object of the meeting.

"Yesterday afternoon Dr. Tibbits suggested that this would be a good time to forward our subscription-list, in accordance with the desire of the Home Mission Committee. Then Mr. Smallridge asked if it wouldn't be a good idea to propose to the members that we ask for fifty dollars less aid. I want to go a little further than that. Did you ever see a baby keep on crawling till it was three, five, even ten years old? Well, what shall we think of a church that crawls, and, what is more, is content to crawl, at the end of thirty-five years?

"In all these years, since the First Church was organized, the only time we have never had aid was this summer, when we were too lazy to fulfill the conditions

necessary to receive aid. I want to move that we thank the Home Mission Committee for bearing with us all these years, and that we ask them to use for some more needy church the money they have been holding for us. I know the motion will have to be made again at a meeting legally called, but I can't wait longer.

"You all favor it, I see. Then, if our pastor will go out of the room for a moment, I want to make another motion. . . . We have been treating him shabbily, and I am to blame. We haven't promised him any regular salary, and we've been paying him less than a day laborer's wage. I move that from this day his salary be one thousand dollars a year, with one month's vacation, and that we make our plans to give him a parsonage as soon as he wishes to use it."

When the latter part of the motion was heard, many turned their eyes toward Grace Dysart.

"Poor thing! They ought to have got her out of the room, too!" more than one whispered.

Some thought that the attention called to her by the motion for the parsonage had

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something to do with her departure from Harmony Center next day. At any rate, her going away was so unexpected that Ostend's first knowledge of it was next evening when he asked to see her.

"What! Gone home?" he asked, incredulously.

Was it strange that he began at once to think of taking a vacation?

XI

HARMONIZED

O STEND'S plans to go to Andean were interrupted. The day after he learned of Grace Dysart's departure he had a call from the man who lived on The Flats, whose babe he had buried.

"I have been wondering if there isn't something I can do for the folks who live down our way," he began. "They feel they haven't any part in the First Church, and they have an idea the Outsiders don't care anything about them. Nobody comes to see us but the tax collector, the doctor, the rent collector, and a few others whose duty brings them that way. Something ought to be done to make them feel that they are folks. I don't know what it might be. I just thought I would talk to you about it."

"I'm glad you came to me," Ostend said. "I, too, think that something should be done. Let me think about it a few days. Perhaps something will suggest itself."

"Don't forget to give us a chance to help in it, whatever it is," the islander pleaded. "If me and my neighbors have a part in it from the very first, I think you'll get hold of us and make us worth something."

That evening The Fishermen held their monthly business meeting. After the transaction of the regular business, Ostend told them of the call of the islander. "We must do something for those people," he said, "and what we do ought to be something that will help to tie this town together. Isn't it a shame that a place with such a delightful name should be so hopelessly divided? I long to see the day when there will be no Insiders and no Outsiders, but one earnest set of people, their hearts set, not on empty rivalry, but on doing the most possible for one another and for those who need help.

"I wonder if our class, made up now of ten men from each side of the river, hasn't been put here for this very work? What work could we ask for that would be better than harmonizing Harmony Center? You have done a great deal toward that end. Isn't there something more we can do?"

"I think there is, Mr. Ostend," Lemuel Galton spoke with animation; "I have a pet scheme I'd like to talk about. Probably some of the others have their own ideas, and some other plans may be far better than mine. So I move the appointment of a committee of five who shall discuss the problem and make a report at a meeting to be held Friday night."

The motion was put and carried unanimously. Galton was made chairman of the committee. By request, President Mayhew was added to the number.

"Of course, our pastor is *ex officio* a member of this committee, as of all committees," Galton said. "Can we all meet to-morrow evening?"

"Let's have our first meeting to-night!" Albert Jenkins suggested. "It is early yet, and what is the use of losing a whole day when there is so much to be done?"

"Let us hear your scheme, Lem," Mayhew said, when the other members of the class had gone and the committee had come to order.

"To do that right, I want to tell you about what happened at Marlboro College when I was over there for Freshman year.

The college was full of cliques. There were fraternities, right and left. There were literary societies, and there were societies of other kinds. The members of these different bodies took sides against each other. This was apparent wherever the students went. Sports were demoralized, the classroom was invaded by the unpleasant spirit, and even in chapel one could see the marks of cliques, and cliques within cliques. It was unpleasant, I assure you.

"We had a student meeting to consider the best way to handle the situation, for the cliques were threatening the disruption of the college. My roommate was a Senior. He was on the committee appointed to decide what should be done. Some of the meetings were held in our room, and I had the opportunity to hear what was said.

"Finally it was decided to recommend the building of a fellowship hall, to be paid for, not by some rich friend of the college, but by the students' own gifts. From this hall, all fraternity talk was to be barred. Every one was to be admitted on equal terms. There were to be no rules, with one exception; every one was to be agreeable there. It was understood that knock-

ing, faultfinding, quarreling and the like would not be tolerated. There was to be no secretary in charge, but the students were to be the guardians of the hall.

"They rose to the occasion. They became jealous of their rights in this place of common meeting. A few of the men forgot the purpose of the building and brought in outside bitterness, but they were quickly and summarily dealt with. Soon Fellowship Hall became the most popular meeting-place in the college, and the influence of the fraternities and other societies declined.

"Now, I suggest that we have a fellowship hall on the island. That would be a good location, for it is on the ground of the people whom we desire especially to reach, and it is not on the ground of either faction of the dwellers in the main town. I see a picture of a building a few rods from the street that leads from bridge to bridge. There should be a parkway in front, with flowers. The building should be a rambling, bungalow-like affair. Everybody should have a part in putting it up—the people on The Flats and the people in the town. I haven't thought just what to call it, and I don't know exactly what ought to go into it.

But of one thing I feel sure—all the people should be free to go in at any time, and none of the petty jealousies that have cursed the town should find shelter inside the doors."

"I like that idea, Mr. Chairman, and I shall be glad to second the motion to suggest such a hall to the class, if Al will make it."

"I pause a moment for any further suggestions," the president said. "Since there are none, I put the question. Shall we have such a hall on the island?"

The motion was carried unanimously.

"And I move that we recommend that it be christened Harmony Hall," Mayhew suggested.

Again the motion was carried. The enthusiasm was growing.

"Now, what do you say to a meeting to-morrow night to talk over suggestions for carrying the plan into effect? You agree? Very well, then. We stand adjourned to meet here at eight o'clock to-morrow evening."

At the second meeting of the committee it was found that enthusiasm had grown rapidly overnight. Every man had some

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suggestion to make. Before the meeting adjourned a comprehensive scheme had been agreed on.

On Friday evening the class met to receive the report and decided to ask for a town meeting to consider the building of Harmony Hall.

"I think I know the man who will give us the ground," Lemuel Galton said. "The foundation stone and the stone for the great chimney and the fireplace for the central hall can be secured right on the island; you know how many bowlders are all about; 'glacial bowlders,' the high-school principal calls them. The men on the island will welcome the chance to shape the stones and put them on the building-site. Some of those who have time will be willing to haul lumber. If I can't get the lumber at cost price from our mills right here in town, I am much mistaken. And the four or five thousand dollars cash we shall require can be secured from the people who have a little to give. I feel sure the scheme is practical."

The mayor of the town was seen. He promised to speak to his associates. As a result, the call for the town meeting was issued promptly. And three weeks after

the appeal of the islander to Ostend, the decision was made to construct Harmony Hall.

When the mayor was asked to name a committee to have charge of the work, he said:

"No, I do not feel I have the right to do this. The plan was thought out by the members of The Fishermen's Bible Class. I suggest that the matter be left in their competent hands. I understand that they have ten members from each side of the river. Surely we could ask nothing better for a neutral organization."

Thus it came about that the First Church organized Bible class was commissioned to do the most important civic task ever attempted in Harmony Center.

They did their work well. Within three months the money had been collected, the lot had been deeded to the trustees of Harmony Hall, members of the building committee, by John Bradley, the ice-cream man, the foundations had been laid, for the most part by the men of the island, and the building had been completed.

On the opening night, early in November, the ample rooms were crowded by

people from every section of the town. "The first fellowship meeting we have ever had in this distracted town," the mayor said.

It was the mayor who disclosed the surprise of the evening. He took his stand before a curtain on the wall near the entrance.

"I have something to show you which has been put here by order of the town officers. The building committee has had nothing to do with it; in fact, they protested vigorously. We overruled them, and I am sure you will be glad we did. Read for yourselves and tell us how you feel."

With the last word he drew the curtain, and disclosed a tablet which bore this inscription:

HARMONY HALL

Erected for the people of Harmony Center
by the people of Harmony Center;
led by the men of The Fisher-
men's Bible Class.
"We Are Not Divided."

Ostend had planned to go to Andean to see Grace Dysart the week after the opening of Harmony Hall. He had ex-

changed three or four letters with her since her sudden departure from Harmony Center. She had shown much interest in the plans for Harmony Hall, and he was looking forward to telling her details of the work.

But again there was an imperative summons to a duty that could not be postponed. The resignation of the pastor of Noble Street Church was announced. In very recent days this had been known as a church of the Outsiders. But with the organization of Harmony Hall, that designation became a thing of the past. In asking his people to release him, the pastor said:

"I don't believe you will make the mistake of calling a successor for this pulpit. I know that some of you have seen the vision that came to me last Friday when we stood in Harmony Hall, that noble work of The Fishermen's Bible Class; you have told me of your dream.

"So I make this suggestion with much boldness. How would you like to form an alliance with the First Church? Make Philip Ostend your pastor. I believe the people would welcome the proposal to

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meet in the morning in this building, and in the evening in the building of the First Church. At the end of a month the arrangement might be reversed. The town covers so little ground that it would not mean a hardship for any to go to either church. As for Sunday school—and, perhaps, prayer-meeting—there might be a service in each church.

"Think it over. See if this isn't your chance to carry on the good work begun by Philip Ostend's young men."

"We don't need to think it over," a member of the congregation said. "I want to move that it is the sense of this meeting that the plan our pastor has outlined be carried out, if it is found to be agreeable to our members and to the First Church people."

There was not a dissenting voice when the motion was put.

This was the startling news that caused a postponement in Ostend's vacation plans.

The marriage of the churches was arranged for within three weeks. The pastor of the Federated Church of Harmony Center remained for the first service under the new auspices. And on Monday morning he started for Andean.

XII

THE GIRL WITH THE PITCHER

O STEND lost no time in getting to Andean. Within an hour after the arrival of his train he took a walk. On this occasion, however, he did not walk aimlessly—he had an objective. But in one respect he acted as on that memorable day of his ordination, five months before; his head was in the clouds, for he was dreaming of the future. To-day a girl played a prominent part in the future.

"I wonder what she will say?" he thought. "I think I know, and yet—what a splendid mistress of the parsonage she will make! What an inspiration she will be to me, and to all the people! It will be great to come home and talk to her about the work, and ask her advice. Then I think—"

But he had no chance to formulate his thoughts, for he was startled by a voice when he did not know any one was near.

"Look out, Mr. Dreamer! Do you

want to spill my milk again? When you asked my pardon last May I granted it, but I had no idea you would try the same trick again!"

"Grace! Where do you come from?"

"From Mrs. White, who gives me every morning a pitcher of milk for my grandmother. Once you spilled grandmother's milk, and you were about to do it again. If you had bumped into me just now, you might have broken the pitcher. What do you think of yourself?"

"I am wondering what she will say when she finds she must get a new pitcher-carrier. To get a new pitcher would be a simple matter in the comparison, and would cause her far less trouble."

"Mr. Ostend! What do you mean?"

"I mean I want her pitcher-carrier. That's what I've come to tell you, Grace."

"O-h-h! Well, let's go inside. We mustn't talk about it out here."

That the talk was satisfactory to both parties was evident when Ostend's stay in Andean was prolonged.

In fact, the young people agreed perfectly on every point except one. Philip asked for a wedding at Christmas, Grace

The Girl with the Pitcher

insisted that the event must be postponed till the following Christmas. There was a deadlock that required frequent and prolonged conferences.

The deadlock was broken in an unforeseen manner. Ostend had not been on his way to Andean an hour when Mark Mayhew was stopped on the street by Mr. Lumly.

"Can you keep a secret?" the merchant asked. "You know that Mr. Ostend went away for a vacation this morning. I think I have a pretty good idea what he went for. It's my notion that before evening he will be in Andean, and that he will stay in Andean many days if the wind sets favorably in a certain quarter."

"You call that a secret, do you?" Mayhew laughed. "Do you take us for simpletons down at our house? Do you suppose we didn't see what was going on between him and Grace Dysart? Have you actually forgotten that she is my cousin, and that it was at our house they had most of their opportunities to meet? Have you never thought that those conferences had a good deal to do with directing the activities of The Fishermen? The class has thought

more than once of making Grace Dysart an honorary member. If what we think comes to pass, she'll be a member by right of marriage. That will be better."

"Sure! I might have thought!" Mr. Lumly was a little crestfallen as he realized that the telling of his secret had fallen flat. "It isn't to be wondered at that I forgot the important part the Mayhew home has played in the summer's events; I have had my mind on a scheme, and I want to talk it over with you. The Fishermen will take delight in doing the work I have in mind for them."

"We're always ready for work, Mr. Lumly. Let's have your scheme. If it needs instant consideration I'll call a meeting of the fellows."

"No such haste as that is necessary. I don't suppose Mr. Ostend will be getting married for a few months yet. But when they do, they'll be in need of a home. The resignation of the pastor of the Noble Street Church will leave the parsonage vacant—or the house will be vacant, just as soon as there is no other use for the property. Dr. Orton says he will move into other quarters when the trustees of the property give him

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the word. He plans to live in Harmony during the rest of his life.

"Now, I think it would be shabby to send him out to a rented house. What do you say to building a little five-room cottage—a place just big enough for two—and asking him to occupy it, rent free, as long as he will favor us with his presence? The town owes a great deal to him. Think of the work he has done for this place! Then, some of us suspect that he hastened the time he had set for his resignation because he wished to take advantage of the era of good feeling started by Harmony Hall, to launch his scheme for the federation of the churches.

"All the children have gone to homes of their own, so five rooms will be ample. The old parsonage will be a little large for young married people, but the pastor of our church needs to live in a dignified house.

"Now for the work which I'd like to see The Fishermen engineer. First, there will be the raising of perhaps one thousand dollars for the purchase of the cottage. Then there will be five hundred dollars to modernize the parsonage, just as much more to furnish the house.

"Is it too much of a contract? Remember, the whole town will back you up. You won't have any difficulty in raising the funds. Talk to the men about it, and when you have a proposition I'll call a meeting of the officers of the church. We must get this thing under way before Mr. Ostend returns."

Mark Mayhew decided to call the special meeting; he did not see why such an important matter should wait two weeks. Curiosity and fidelity combined to bring out the entire class. To them was outlined Mr. Lumly's suggestion.

"Now, what do you think of it, men?"

"I like the scheme," John Bradley said, after waiting a moment for one of the older members to speak. "It will be fine to do something for Dr. Orton, and there will be enthusiastic response to an invitation to get ready for the day of Mr. Ostend's marriage. May it come speedily! But I hope Mr. Lumly won't object if I suggest a change in his plan.

"I don't like the idea of putting Dr. and Mrs. Orton out of the parsonage where they have lived for nearly forty years. The house was built for him when the young

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pastor brought Mrs. Orton here, a bride. Their children were born there. From that home two of them went home to God. Three times the town has rejoiced with the old people when a daughter went from the parsonage to the church in bridal array.

"I know that they are willing to go to another house, but why should we let them do it? The house is too large for them, now that the children are all gone, is it? How about the reunions at Thanksgiving or at Christmas, when the children and grandchildren gather about the old people? How would they look in five rooms? Where would they accommodate us when we go there for the annual reception and good-cheer gathering? Maybe Mr. Lumly thought that would be omitted now that Dr. Orton has resigned. I think I know his people better than that. I haven't been a church-member long, so I suppose I ought not to express an opinion, yet I feel that the friends of Dr. and Mrs. Orton will not forget them.

"Let's take it for granted that they will be left in the parsonage when we make our proposition through Mr. Lumly.

"Now, for a home for our pastor. Let's

have a modern house—not too large, but comfortable and sightly. Let's put it in a central location. Let's furnish it from top to bottom—or, rather, suppose we provide the funds so that the folks who will use the furniture can select it for themselves.

"What location would be better than the island? Isn't it strange that this sightly, central location has been passed by so long in favor of the mainland? I know every newcomer to the town thought he had to live on one side of the river or the other. Why? There are no floods to trouble those who live on the higher part of the island. The place is healthy—we know that, for it is right at our doors. People are beginning to realize these facts. Since Harmony Hall was built, owners of property on the island have sold some sites for homes; four houses are now going up.

"I do own real estate on the island, and I am naturally interested in seeing the development of the property. I intend to build my new home there. Just here let me say, I thought that when I began to close my restaurant on Sunday I would have to retrench; instead of that, business was never so prosperous as now, and the house I had

The Girl with the Pitcher

thought to build three years from now is to go up next summer.

"Well, to make a long story short, I would like the privilege of giving for a new parsonage for Mr. Ostend any one hundred feet of my island property which a committee may select. In addition to this, I would like to give five hundred dollars to start the building fund, on the condition that a house to cost not less than four thousand dollars is completed within a year.

"Does that sound as if I am making a business proposition? Very well—some people will feel that is my thought. I own that it will be a good investment from a worldly point of view. But that is not in my mind. I am proposing the island because I feel it is the only place for a home for the pastor of the federated church of a town that has been pitifully divided by factions."

When the enthusiastic man took his seat, Lemuel Galton was ready to propose action.

"Mr. President," he said, "I like Mr. Bradley's scheme so much that I move we recommend the acceptance of his offer when we talk to Mr. Lumly."

"You have heard Galton's motion. Is

there a second? Then, all in favor make it known."

The men were so enthusiastic in their decision that Mr. Lumly was inspired by them. His zeal was communicated to others. Within a week plans were under way for the new parsonage. The Fishermen put themselves at the disposal of the older men named to have charge of the work, and were assured that their services would be needed.

When all was arranged, Mr. Lumly telegraphed to his pastor:

"Federated Church parsonage on the island is to be ready for use June 1 next. Can hasten the date if thought advisable."

The message was delivered to Ostend while he was sitting with Grace on the veranda of the Dysart home. He read it, then passed it to her. She read the words and laughed.

"What shall I reply?"

"Tell him the first of June will be a good time," she said, smiling.





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